

# NEBRASKA JUDICIAL NEWS

*A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR NEBRASKA JUDICIAL OFFICIALS AND PERSONNEL*

## Judicial Awards Given to Two of Nebraska's Distinguished Judges



*Distinguished Judge for Improvement of the Judiciary, Hon. F. A. Gossett and his wife, Cathy.*



*Distinguished Judge for Service to the Community, Hon. Don Rowlands and his wife, Karen*

## Supreme Court Honors Exceptional Judges in State System

Two judges were honored for their outstanding efforts within and outside of the courtroom, one for his work with the state's growing Latino and Hispanic communities and the other for developing an evidence handbook used statewide.

District Judge Donald E. Rowlands of North Platte and District Judge F.A. Gossett III of Fremont were honored during the Nebraska Judges Fall Education Program during the judges' annual dinner on October 19, 2000 in Omaha.

The distinguished judge awards recognize the exceptional work of judges for service to the judicial system and to their community.

Judge Rowlands, who has served central Nebraska's 11th judicial district since 1986, was honored as the Distinguished Judge for Service to the Community. Gossett, named to the 6th judicial district bench in 1998 after serving 17 years as a county court judge, was cited as Distinguished Judge for Improvement of the Judiciary.

Judge F. A. Gossett, recipient of the Distinguished Judge for Improvement of the Judiciary award, began compiling an outline on handling evidence shortly after he was named to the county court bench in 1981. That outline eventually grew into a book published by Nebraska Continuing

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# OF INTEREST TO THE JUDICIARY

Legal Education and distributed to lawyers and judges across the state.

The judge continually updates the Nebraska Evidence Handbook and has given several presentations to the bench and bar on the topic. He is frequently sought out for advice in dealing with evidence issues.

Judge Gossett was nominated for the award on improvement of the judiciary by County Court Judge Patrick G. Rogers and Judge Gossett's former employee, Vicki Kuhlmann, Clerk Magistrate in Tekamah.

Judge Gossett, 56, is now a resident of Fremont. He and his wife, Cathy, have three grown children.

He earned his bachelor's degree at Midland College in Fremont in 1967 and his law degree at Creighton University in 1972.

He entered private practice and served as Fremont City Prosecutor until 1981. He also was Dodge County Attorney until 1981, when he was appointed to the county court bench in the sixth Judicial District. He was appointed to the district court bench in 1998 by then-Gov. Ben Nelson.

For 15 years, Judge Gossett has served on the faculty of the National Judicial College. He chaired the faculty council in 1997, and was a member of that council from 1991-98. He has delivered lectures for judicial groups across the country, as well as in Russia and Armenia.

He served as president of the Nebraska County Judges Association from 1985-86, was a special master for the Nebraska Supreme Court in 1997 and served on the 1996 task force that looked at mandatory continuing education for lawyers.

He has served on the Board of Directors of the Nebraska State Bar

Association's Continuing Legal Education organization since 1998.

Besides his handbook on evidence, Judge Gossett has also published a national training manual, "Addressing Victims' Needs — A Judicial Perspective" for the U.S. Department of Justice, and an article, "Why Teach in a National Judicial Education Program," for the National Judicial College Alumni Magazine.

Judge Rowlands was nominated for his work with Latino and Hispanic communities in his district by Marisela Romero, speaker for the Nebraska Humanities Council, and Ellen Eby, Dawson County Clerk of the District Court.

The judge has helped with a local Hispanic citizenship project, speaking to classes about the judicial branch of the American system of government and developing a booklet on the court system for distribution to citizenship students. It included a glossary of legal terms that new citizens should understand.

Judge Rowlands also organized, in 1995, a two-day cultural awareness meeting between judges from across the state and Hispanic leaders with the goals of fostering understanding of the judiciary and building cultural awareness, and exploring potential problems that might be encountered in court. Topics included proper use of courtroom interpreters and current U.S. immigration policies, and included a practical test to determine if a witness is understanding instructions relayed through an interpreter.

The judge also served on a task force that set up guidelines and certification requirements for court interpreters. Dawson County has one of the few certified courtroom interpreters.

Because of his high regard among Latinos and Hispanics, Judge Rowlands was invited this July to speak at the

citizenship/naturalization ceremony at Lexington. A jury trial, however, interfered.

Judge Rowlands, 50, is a native of Columbus, Neb. He and his wife, Karen, have been married for 29 years and have two children.

He is a 1971 graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a 1974 graduate of the University of Nebraska School of Law. He was a member of the U.S. Army Reserve from 1970-76 and was an outstanding graduate of a military police academy. He taught business law at Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte for two years.

Judge Rowlands' community activities include chairman of the Lincoln County Alcohol and Drug Education Program from 1975-78, serving as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1980, and being a board member of Western Nebraska Legal Services from 1983-86.

He was appointed to the district court bench on April 25, 1986, by then-Gov. Bob Kerrey.

The judge has served on the Judicial Education Committee since 1986 and served as its chair from 1990-93. He has been a member of the Ethics Committee since 1995.

He has lectured on family law and child sexual abuse at seminars, and organized nearly a dozen seminars on issues ranging from search and seizure to jury and trial management.

Recipients of last year's outstanding judge awards were Judge Robert O. Hippe of Scottsbluff and retired Judge James M. Murphy of Omaha. ♦